

PERMANENCY SUMMITS

Increase the number of children achieving timely reunification/permanency

Why have a Permanency Summit?

- Provide an opportunity for child welfare system professionals, including line staff, to gather in a forum outside of the courtroom setting.
- Develop understanding of each other's roles in the child welfare process.
- Address system issues and share ideas for system improvement.
- Inspire and build champions for permanency.

The Court Improvement Program federal grant works towards improving the court system regarding dependency cases. A statewide multidisciplinary workgroup was formed to address timely permanency for children in out of home care. To focus our improvement efforts, information was gathered regarding child welfare stakeholders in areas that had high lengths of stay as well as low lengths of stay in out of home care, to identify commonalities and differences. Through this process, a large turnover in caseworkers was observed and the group looked at root causes. The workgroup identified the needs listed above and decided to host permanency summits, similar to the regional Reasonable Efforts Symposia, only at a local level, to work on improving professional relationships and addressing system issues.

What is the Criteria for Counties to be Chosen?

The workgroup prioritizes counties with the longest lengths of stay in out of home care that lack system improvement resources, such as state Family and Juvenile Court Improvement Program (FJCIP) grants and Court Improvement Training Academy (CITA) Tables of Ten stakeholder groups.

What is the Process for Planning a Permanency Summit?

A meeting is scheduled by the co-chairs of the workgroup (AOC and Children's Administration) with you and other child welfare stakeholders in your county (judicial officers, Children's Administration Regional Administrators/Supervisors, AAG, parent attorney, child attorney, CASA, tribe) to form a summit planning group. At this first meeting the group will review relevant data, talk about what some of the barriers are to timely permanence and make plans to hold a Permanency Summit. A co-director from the UW Court Improvement Training Academy also provides their expertise and facilitation skills. Usually two in-person meetings are held, lasting approximately two hours each. Any follow-up details will be handled via conference call or email. Funding for the summit will be paid for by the Court Improvement Program federal grant, Children's Administration, and Casey Family Programs. There should be no out-of-pocket expenses for your county to host this event.

What does a Permanency Summit Include?

- Day-long event with lunch provided
- Data presentation (send information to participants prior to event).
- Roles and responsibilities presentation – to develop an understanding of each role in the dependency process and that we are all working towards a common goal.
- Presentations on barriers identified by planning group - 2-3 topics – for example, early engagement and support for parents, shared planning meetings, permanency plan options, parent-child visits, etc.
- Team building activity – attendees get out of their groups and get to know others in the system.
- Identify priorities and develop an action plan to improve time to permanency.

What happens after the summit?

GOAL: Local stakeholder workgroup will meet on a regular basis to follow up on action plans and address other dependency related issues as they come up. Judicial leadership plays a big role in the success of these efforts.

AOC and Children's Administration staff will follow up with persons responsible for action items to report on progress and serve as a resource for moving plans forward. One year post summit, AOC will provide evaluation results to show systems change and whether improvements were made in permanency timeliness measures.

Questions?

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